

*Eryn Arnem, Ringarë 6th, Fourth Age 11*

*Éowyn, Lady of Ithilien, to Khorazîr, Lord of Khiblat Pharazôn*

*Dear Khorazîr,*

*I trust this letter finds you and your family well. By the time the midwinter celebrations will be nearing, so may all your festivities be merry and joyous. I am sure that Minas Tirith is beginning to show signs of the coming holiday, but so far, Faramir is the only one of our family there, and more on that later.*

*Your account of little Hanneh was wonderful to read. I am very happy for Aravôr and Melike, and you, ofcourse. You make her sound like a beautiful little girl, and I wish I could see her for myself. It is indeed a shame that the little ones are still too small to travel. Please give my and Faramir's congratulations to the new parents. Hanneh is what, nearing six months old now? Her personality should really be starting to show now that the sleepy months are over. When I am in the City, I will try to find something nice for her. Secretly, I have always wanted a daughter, and maybe one day I will, but for now I am content with my three little boys. Three little boys who are all in various stages of having a cold.*

*Elboron and Meriadoc were the first to get sick, and now they are mostly well again except for the occasional cough or sniffle. Peregrin is still feeling poorly, but he is on the mend too. Teherin has been seeing to him lately. She has tried to give him some herbal tea, but he despises it. I do not think he trusts her now that she has tried to make him drink it. I am not sure which boy I caught a cold from, but I am still trying to get well. That is hard to do when a sock baby wants to stay on my lap all day.*

*The twins are almost ready to start walking. They are able to pull themselves to their feet if they have a chair or low table to hold onto, and they will take a few steps if I hold onto both hands, but they have not figured out how to put the two together yet. Once they do learn, though, there will be no stopping them. They have gotten so big over the summer and autumn. Their hair has turned a darker shade of gold, and I see a little more of Faramir in them now, though they still look strongly like my family. Their babblings are sounding more like words, and they know that they will get a reaction if they say "da-da" or "ma-ma."*

*Elboron is growing and changing too. I still see him as my little one, but he is becoming more independent every day. He does not want help putting on his clothes anymore, though buttons and shoe laces still give him problems. He wants a pony, but it will be several years before he gets that wish. He also wants a lion, but he certainly will not have one until he is all grown up. Though I have gotten used to having Pharzi, Azrahil's lioness, around, I still do not like the idea of a beast that powerful near my little ones. Elboron knows he is not allowed to near her unless his Dadi and Azrahil are with him, but I still feel a stab of fear when we are out in the garden and I look up and do not see him immediately. One evening, he sneaked off toward Pharzi's pen and had almost made it there before Faramir found him. We did not let him play outside for several days after that. It was punishment enough for him; you remember how much he loves being outside. Alas, I fear*

*there may be worse things than lions in his future. I cannot imagine how anyone could be able to hate him, but one day he will grow up, and one day he will have true enemies, just like his father.*

*Enough of this. He is still young and innocent and happy. I think he is even beginning to forget some of what happened earlier this year. Some days he asks what happened to the "bad man," but mostly he is content to have his Dadi back with him. He does remember that all the bad things started happening after Faramir left home, so when Faramir was ready to leave on his first long trip since the spring, Elboron wailed from "goodbye" until well after he was out of sight. Faramir took that very hard.*

*As for Faramir himself, I do not think that you have to have any long talks with him yet. Elessar forbade him from returning to his duties immediately so he could regain his strength. There were many of us making sure that he obeyed that order. He returned to his duties slowly over the course of the summer. He spent most of his free time with the children and our friends, and I think that was better for him than any healer's skills. I do not think his old strength is back, and honestly, I wonder if it ever will be. About a month after Midsummer he had a fever that kept him in bed for several days, and now that he is in the City for council meetings, I fear he is becoming ill again. He wrote that he had been feeling unwell and had been sent out of council by the king to go home and rest. Am I making too much of this? Is it nothing more than one of the sicknesses that gets passed around the City every year? I want to believe it is, but I worry about him.*

*As soon as Peregrin is well, and the weather clears (it has been quite nasty and cold these past days), we are going to travel to the City both for the midwinter feast and to check on Faramir. Teherin is already preparing to leave as soon as the weather improves. I want to know whether something is wrong with him, and moreover if this is something he will have to struggle with for the rest of his life. I am terrified that one day we will receive a message from the City that he is gravely ill, only to arrive and find that we're too late. I had never really worried about that before, but now it seems as though it is always on my mind.*

*But perhaps those are fears drifting over from another situation. Túrin's father's health is not good, and there are fears that he will leave us sometime in the next months. Though such news about the dear man is hard, I cannot help but feel a bit jealous that we have so much warning that his time is short. There have been many people in my life for whom I wish I could've had such a luxury to say goodbye. And yet his loss will be a sad one.*

*But enough of gloomy matters. I am afraid that they have filled far too much of this letter.*

*Maybe by the time you read this Azrahil will have arrived. He has been busy with council matters, according to Faramir, and I doubt he will make it in time for the feasts unless his is able to leave within the next few days. I hope he arrives without trouble. I doubt his safety is guaranteed anywhere south of Poros anymore. Or even some places north of the river. He has made some powerful enemies, but by the same token, he has powerful friends as well.*

*I am sure his meeting with Narjede will be interesting if not somewhat awkward, and I shall require as much of an account of it as you can give me. (I fear I am becoming like some of the gos-*

*sip-hungry women of the court!)*

*Ah, but I also fear that it is late, the candle is burning low, and though the letter is shorter than it should be, I think I have nothing else to add this time.*

*So, may your midwinter celebrations be joyous and memorable, and give my and Faramir's greetings to all your family!*

*Éowyn*

*P.S. I recall you told me once that you had the idea of wedding Narjede. Whatever came of that, for I have heard nothing. Surely the famous Khorazîr has not lost his nerve*